

The Period of Displacement 1943-1947

DESPITE A SEEMING EQUILIBRIUM in the miller competition, changes had begun. Because of emerging criticism of their politicking and economic control, the millers altered their leadership strategies by placing a more solid boundary around their factional support. These strategies, however, were opposites: one leader emphasized "elitism" and vertical cleavages, the other stressed "democracy" and diagonalism. The resource structure at the time, however, made elitism and vertical mobilization the more successful for the confrontations within the general oscillating factional process.

The period to be described, as the label implies, was one in which the miller "game" was replaced. The further development of diagonalism became possible because major changes in the resource structure altered the villagers' economic and socio-political position vis-à-vis the miller elite. This chapter describes these structural alterations and the associated changes in factional politics.

Alterations in the Resource Structure

Ordinance Number 16 of 1935, as has been noted, removed the requirement that the electorate be literate in English and provided for the election rather than the appointment of both councillors and chairmen in Village Districts. The new ordinance became relevant in 1936 when the status of Rajgahr was changed from Country to Village District. Every villager now had an additional resource, a vote, to exchange with the elite.

At a public meeting in 1935, villagers, for the first time, publicly condemned the local administration and public works projects. They demanded new councillors and objected to the proposal to change the village name to Rampur. Dagleish and Premeisingh were the major organizers¹ of this "rebellion". Their petitions also effected the change in the status of the village since both were attempting to establish their own resource base by using the new electoral rules and the growing dissatisfaction. However, their strategies produced no immediate changes in the political process since the majority of villagers remained economically bound to the millers who

¹ Interview with P. T. Premeisingh, March, 1970 and Dagleish, February, 1970.

maintained their competitive relationship. It was still to each villager's advantage to ensure that his leader had formal political power. Further, since economic dependency overrode the potential of political choice, Prem Singh and Dagleish remained caught in traditional factional alignments and were cut off from new leadership. Finally, the altercation between Prem Singh and Maraj in 1938 further polarized the village along factional lines.

The electoral and status changes, however, even though limited in effect, appear to have raised the level of political consciousness. The increased number of petitions, after 1936, complaining about various problems² is an index of this even though the signatories still followed the traditional leadership alignments. Villagers had begun to see themselves as a political as well as an economic resource. The potential of this attitude, however, necessarily remained untapped until the millers' economic control could be curtailed and a credible leadership be made available to exploit both the electorate as a political resource and the growing dissatisfaction. By 1943, these conditions were satisfied.

One major factor creating these conditions was the colonial government's attempt to control the rice industry by forming, in 1939, the Rice Marketing Board.

Conditions were almost chaotic and the industry bore all the marks of lack of organization, instability and uneconomic prices. There were about forty exporting concerns and approximately one hundred and seventy spies and small millers competing destructively in the buying and selling of rice... Cognizant of these difficulties, government intervened to provide some form of protection to rice producers, and the Rice Marketing Board came into being.³

The Board bought rice from the producer at a well-defined price and paid cash. This made available an alternate method of surplus disposal provided the villager could be relieved of his dependence on the millers' credit facilities. This became possible with a breakdown in the monocrop production pattern. In the late thirties, and particularly by 1942, an increasing proportion of villagers began using their cultivation lots for growing greens and provision crops with rice maintained solely on the lands rented from the Local Authority behind the Crown Dam.⁴ This change in land use came about because of soil exhaustion in front of the Crown Dam; after forty years, the average yield per acre had fallen to six bags of padi.⁵ The government had also established a "Grow More Food Campaign" to decrease imports during the war. Agents had been encouraging farmers to grow provisions. They pointed

2 From the files of the District Commissioner, Fort Wellington.

3 *The Rice Review*, October-December, 1959: 30.

4 Interview with Petamber Singh, November, 1968.

5 Memo from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Commissioner of Local Government, November 24, 1942.

out the low returns from rice and suggested that the higher elevation of the cultivation lots made them suitable for provisions if the drainage were improved.⁶

The effects were twofold. The changeover put 510 acres of land under provisions, or just slightly less than the amount under rice in the New and Jib Lands.⁷ A family now could provide most of its subsistence needs with a surplus of varying crops to exchange or sell. This diversification also gave more flexibility—farmers were less liable to suffer total crop failure. As a result, they were less dependent on the millers' credit facilities and their cyclical indebtedness could be somewhat curtailed.⁸ Second, the expansion of provision farming required improved drainage facilities which severely strained the financial resources of the village. The millers were blamed for the resulting depressed state, and, unable to make improvements, they came under increasing attack from villagers.⁹

In the late thirties, it was normal for local authority officials and labourers to wait months for salaries and wages. For example, in 1937, after his dismissal, Ranger Dass's lawyer asked the District Commissioner to guarantee that twelve months back wages would be paid to his client.¹⁰ The District Commissioner declined to do this "as the district has no money at present".¹¹ Further, ordinary labourers were not being paid,¹² and in 1937, the council asked the District Commissioner for a \$600 overdraft pending the collection of rates to pay off outstanding paysheets.¹³ Villagers were refusing to work for the local authority and public works projects could not be carried out. Further, a circular pattern had emerged: because the authority could not pay wages, labourers could not pay rates and rents and since the local authority could not collect, it could not pay labourers.

The District Commissioner refused to advance the 1937 loan because the money would be used to pay for works already done and because the local authority had

6 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District, 1942 and interview with Petamber Singh, November, 1969.

7 Letter from P. Gainall, Overseer, Rajgahr Village, to the Chairman, Food Production Committee, Berbice, August 24, 1942.

8 Interview with Petamber Singh, November, 1969 and Dagleish, March, 1970.

9 Letter from the Commissioner of Labour and Local Government to the Rajgahr Village Council, August 24, 1941, concerning the application for a \$500 loan.

Memo from the District Commissioner to the Commissioner for Local Government, November 24, 1942.

Petition to the Chairman of the Local Government Board from twelve proprietors, March 9, 1944.

10 Letter from V. D. Wilfred, New Amsterdam, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, October 26, 1937.

11 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to V. D. Wilfred, New Amsterdam, November 30, 1937.

12 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village District, April 1, 1937.

Letter from N. I. Dookhun, Overseer, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, April 17, 1945.

13 *Ibid.*

been giving out work knowing that no funds were available. He suggested that the council stop all works and collect outstanding rates¹⁴

In the previous year, the authority had received a \$700 loan,¹⁵ but by 1938, the District Commissioner was trying to prevent cyclical indebtedness and make the village administration independent of outside finances.¹⁶ By August 1939, however, nothing had improved; only thirty-five percent of the rates and arrears had been collected. In addition, over \$1,300 was owed on paysheets, loans, and outstanding accounts.¹⁷

In 1940, the village again applied to the District Commissioner for a loan of \$827 to repair the drainage sluice.¹⁸ He refused to recommend both the loan and an order for the repair materials. The Local Government Board overruled this recommendation.¹⁹ The Public Works Department, however, did not approve the type of sluice and suggested another one costing twice as much as the first. This time, since only fifteen percent of the rates and two percent of the rents had been collected,²⁰ the Local Government Board agreed that the village could not afford the financial commitment which the loan entailed.

By 1942, the situation was aggravated because the villagers were demanding additional rice acreage in the area behind the Crown Dam since they were converting the front lands to provisions. Not only did they need better drainage for the provisions area, but to enable the local authority to rent additional rice acreage, fencing and kokers had to be constructed and the condition of the land improved. A loan application for \$2,000 to recondition the rice and provisions areas was refused²¹

14 Letter from the District Commissioner to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village, April 1, 1937.

15 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Chairman, Local Government Board, March 16, 1936.

Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village, May 6, 1936.

16 *Op. cit.*

17 Letter from the Acting District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village District, August 15, 1939.

18 Accretion had begun on the West Berbice coast several years before and an extension to the original channel had been dug a half mile beyond the original sea sluice. An additional koker had been built at the end of the extension. The original sea sluice had meanwhile fallen into disrepair while the outer sluice had been badly undermined.

Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Commissioner of Labour and Local Government, April 8, 1940.

19 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Rajgahr Village District, May 9, 1940.

20 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Commissioner of Labour and Local Government, March 3, 1942.

21 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Commissioner of Labour and Local Government, March 3, 1942.
Motion passed by the Rajgahr Village Council and forwarded by Gainall, Overseer, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, February 23, 1942.

as had a similar application for \$500 the previous year.²² The finances of the village were such that villagers' demands for services were not being accommodated.

A final footnote in this pattern of dissatisfaction and structural change was the growth of a literate second generation. Allegedly the millers had exploited those unable to check the records of their transactions. It was common practice for a villager, who came to the mill for one bag of rice for home use, to be asked to put his mark on a receipt which recorded he had taken three bags.²³ Informants state that, as their children began to go to school,²⁴ the villagers would bring them to the mill to check the transactions which the millers recorded.

By the early forties, there were, as has been shown, changes which indicated fundamental alterations in the resource structure of the village. A new power base was available to be politically exploited after economic options provided disengagement from cyclical indebtedness. The millers could no longer control all the resources—economic and political—on which they had maintained their position. What was needed, and what emerged, was a leadership to challenge the political position of the elite by using the major new political resource, the enfranchised unindebted villager. As the unmet demands for the expansion of acreage and services accumulated, motivation for supporting a new leadership emerged. The politics of this period are labelled the "politics of displacement," to dramatize the emergence of a new group ostensibly engaged in a "fight" to remove the old leaders from their positions of power and influence.

The new leadership was made up of six persons who claimed to have joined together to challenge the millers' position.²⁵ They were, however, either the second generation of the original elite families or of the cores which had been involved in factional competition. First, there was Gerald Panchar, the son of Jacob Panchar and Shirley Maraj-Panchar. Second, William Jaikarran, the son of Ramdharry with whom A. B. Ramprashad had engaged in the Armadale farming venture and whose family had been a Ramprashad supporter. Third, there was Abdul Ebrahim whose sister had married the son of Alladin Azam, a Panchar supporter. His father's brother had married the sister of Imdad Usman, one of Panchar's core supporters. Fourth was Petamber Singh, a nephew of Dindayalsingh, a long-term Ramprashad supporter.²⁶ Finally, there were Mark Bhagwan and Lalman, close friends of Gerald

22 Memo from the Commissioner of Labour and Local Government, August 27, 1941.

23 Interview with Anjuman, August 1969; Petamber Singh, November 1969; and Amin Mohamed, September 1969.

24 Between 1931 and 1946 the literacy rate in Guyana among East Indians increased from 25.1 percent to fifty-six percent (Nath, 1970: 247), and the survey of educational levels reached (Chapter II) indicates a similar upward swing.

25 Interview with Dagleish, March, 1970 and Petamber Singh, November, 1969.

26 The linkages of William Jaikarran and Petamber Singh to Gerald Panchar can in fact be defined as second-order kinship links. However, by the second generation, the protagonists themselves no longer viewed this tie as particularly important. Singh and Jaikarran are therefore viewed as allied to Panchar on other bases.

Panchar²⁷ and the only ones whose families had not been part of the elite or its core. In effect, the only factor separating these persons from the old elite was that of generation.²⁸ It was precisely this factor, however, which made possible a new popular front ideology in opposition to the miller elite. "People wanted a change and so they voted for the younger men."²⁹ On a normative level, the villagers perceived the politics as a "fight." In fact, the new leadership was absorbed into the pre-existing competition as individuals, not as a party as their public platform implied. Goals and perceptions thus operated on two levels. Despite this, both the "coalition" and the villager accepted the same strategy, that of infiltrating the village council which now became the focal point for factional competition.

The Phases of Factional Displacement

The resulting process can be divided into three phases. The first was the election of the new personalities onto the council and the possibility of their being labelled in terms of the traditional factional alignments given their familial ties.

By 1944, the council was made up of the six new personnel and several old competitors: Dagleish, Preamsingh, A. B. Ramprashad, Ernest Ramprashad, and Parmeshwar.³⁰ Once on council, the possible labelling of the new councillors was aggravated by their personal vested interests in the ongoing factional competition. For example, in 1942, Abdul Ebrahim defected from Panchar because Jacob Panchar had promised him the deputy chairmanship and had not kept the bargain.³¹ Similarly, William Jaikarran was subverted by Panchar when the latter promised to make him council chairman.³²

Past links and present manoeuvring, an extension of the old factional process, could have altered the public front. Then, in early 1944, Jacob Panchar died. Since the majority of new councillors were his supporters, and since Gerald Panchar had, in any case, access to the economic resources of his father's mill, he was defined as heir, leader and council chairman.³³ Villagers then assumed that the new personnel were opposing the old system by aligning themselves against Ramprashad and his supporters. In fact, the former Panchar supporters were mobilized by a new leader and the old alignments continued. However, the leadership change combined with

27 Interview with Dagleish, March, 1970 and Petamber Singh, November, 1969.

28 *Ibid.* Petamber Singh constantly emphasized the notion of these men being the "younger generation".

29 Interview with Petamber Singh, November, 1969.

30 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village Council, 1944.

31 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village Council and Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969.

32 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village District and Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969.

33 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village Council. Gerald Panchar was elected Chairman the year after the death of his father.

the popular definition of the political situation meant that the competitive norms had not only altered, but that they were no longer agreed upon: each leader now used human resources in a different way. Eligibility for competition and the resultant team composition became defined differently by each leader. Concomitant with this, major control mechanisms of equal access to resources and team size were upset. Specifically, Ramprashad concentrated on his old methods of economic domination; Gerald Panchar emphasized electoral strength.³⁴ As more villagers emerged from indebtedness, Panchar's support increased; Ramprashad's decreased. What had been an electoral ploy for displacing the factional system, became, in actual fact, a fight.

A few weeks after Panchar's death, Gerald Panchar began a systematic destruction of Ramprashad's socio-political and economic hegemony which Ramprashad was powerless to stop. Panchar's first step in this second phase was to delimit Ramprashad's administrative power by removing John Ramprashad from the overseer's position. Panchar simply terminated his services and presented the District Commissioner with a *fait accompli*.³⁵ Simultaneously, Panchar and his supporters began a strategy of emphasizing popular causes rather than supporting individual clients. For example, by claiming that a water shortage had lowered padi yields, they had the Local Government Board reduce the rents of all growers by fifty percent.³⁶

Ramprashad meanwhile tried several countermeasures. First, he renewed his emphasis of obtaining political and economic support by performing services for individuals, particularly in connection with their claims against other persons and the council. Second, he disrupted the administrative continuity of the council through boycotts, the interruption of meetings, and interference in council functions. A third and final strategy was his search for control mechanisms to stop the cumulative success of Gerald Panchar's popular front. Ramprashad continuously attempted to draw into the political arena, a presumably neutral person, the District Commissioner, in the hope that he would mediate the "fight".

In late 1944, after the reaping and when villagers usually paid their rents, councillors, Dagleish, Preamsingh, and John Ramprashad advised the non-payment of a one dollar increase on the grounds that the council's motion to raise rents had not been

34 This becomes apparent from the situations described below and from the description of the competition given by A. B. Ramprashad, September, 1969 and Petamber Singh, October, 1969.

35 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Chairman, Rajgahr Village, February 24, 1944.

Memo from the Commissioner of Local Government to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, March 28, 1944.

Memo from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Commissioner of Local Government, April 4, 1944.

36 Memo from the District Administration Officer, Fort Wellington, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, November 20, 1944.

recorded in the minutes. In the village office, John Ramprashad prevented people from paying their rents to the overseer.³⁷ About the same time, a renter named Mangar appealed to Ramprashad for a rent reduction because of his poor crop.³⁸ Ramprashad brought the matter before the council, but the chairman refused to allow his motion. A. B. and John Ramprashad, Premsingh and Dagleish left the meeting.³⁹ At the following meeting, A. B. Ramprashad complained of the rejected motion and again left the meeting.⁴⁰ He then appealed to the District Commissioner for an investigation.⁴¹ The District Commissioner asked for the chairman's comments. Bhagwan stated that an investigation of Ramprashad's mill disclosed that Mangar had obtained ninety bags as opposed to the forty-five Ramprashad claimed.⁴²

A major incident in 1946 indicated a turning point. A. B. Ramprashad was approached for aid in the traditional manner by Amin Mohamed and his brothers. They had rented forty-one acres of Jib Land in 1945 from the Local Authority. The family stated that they had invested large sums in fencing and levying, but that in early 1946, the council had given this land to the Bhagwandin family even though the Amins had reapplied for the land within the week specified by council. On receiving the complaint, Ramprashad took the matter directly to the District Commissioner,⁴³ a classic manoeuvre of by-passing the chairman.⁴⁴ At the next council meeting the dispute was discussed. The issues involved were first, whether the council had specified tenureship for only one year. The minutes were unclear in this respect. Second, the council maintained that the week specified for applications was only for land within the fenced area of the Jib: the Amins' land lay outside. At that point, the Bhagwandin family withdrew their application in favour of the Amins.⁴⁵

37 Letter from Mark Bhagwan, Chairman, Rajghar Village, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, October 23, 1944.

Memo from the District Administration Officer, Fort Wellington, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, November 3, 1944.

38 Letter from Mangar to the Chairman and Members of the Rajgahr Village Council, November 20, 1944.

39 Letter from A. B. Ramprashad to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, December 11, 1944.

40 Letter from A. B. Ramprashad to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, March 5, 1945.

41 Letter from A. B. Ramprashad to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, April 5, 1945.

42 Letter from Mark Bhagwan, Chairman, Rajgahr Village, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, December 13, 1944.

43 Letter from A. B. Ramprashad to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, February 13, 1946.

Minute from the District Administration Officer, Fort Wellington, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, undated.

44 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to William Jaikarran, February 18, 1946.

Letter from William Jaikarran to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, February 22, 1946.

45 Letter from William Jaikarran to the District Administration Officer, Fort Wellington, March 3, 1946.

Theoretically, if this incident had been incorporated in terms of the old factional competition, the Bhagwandins would have obtained the land given Panchar's numerical superiority on council and the Amins' association with Ramprashad. Why was the application withdrawn? The answer lies in three pressures which moved the dispute towards conciliation instead of continued competition. First, the District Commissioner encouraged the council to allow the Amins to retain the land for at least one more year because of the confusion in the time specified for the reapplication; because of the capital invested; and because the minutes did not specify that the original rental had been for one year only.⁴⁶ Second, in 1945, the Colonial Government had passed the Rice Farmers' Security of Tenure Ordinance which was designed to protect tenants from arbitrary removal by landlords. The danger of the Amins involving the council in litigation before the Assessment Court set up by the Ordinance to deal with complaints, was a pressure on the council to compromise.⁴⁷ Conciliation, however, was still not inevitable. The council had disregarded the District Commissioner's suggestions on previous occasions and, as well, had gone to court on other issues.

The third factor appears to have been the crucial one, that is, the new distribution of power which was associated with Gerald Panchar's consolidation of a superior populist position vis-à-vis Ramprashad. By 1946, Panchar's support outnumbered Ramprashad's by a ratio of more than two to one.⁴⁸ Using this as the base for council control, Panchar was firmly entrenched. With the village having no electoral alternatives, Panchar could compromise on particular issues with the added possibility of mobilizing the large and increasingly wealthy Amin family which had supported Ramprashad for more than twenty years.

With this incident, the phase ended. Conciliation of conflict was shown to be possible; dispute settlement could be handled outside the framework of factional competition. The third stage in the process of displacement was Ramprashad's withdrawal from competition. Premsingh again went to Atkinson;⁴⁹ Ernest Ramprashad lost his council seat; John Ramprashad was dismissed as overseer;⁵⁰ and A. B. Ramprashad, always aware of his superiority over the "coolies" because of his

Letter from the District Administration Officer, Fort Wellington, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, March 12, 1946.

46 Minute from the District Administration Officer, Fort Wellington, to the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, undated.

47 Letter from the District Commissioner, New Amsterdam, to the Chairman, Rajgahr Local Authority, February 18, 1946.

48 Lists of villagers were given to three informants who were asked to state the factional affiliation of persons during the 1930's and mid-forties. In over ninety percent of the cases, all three informants gave the same information. From comparing these lists, the change of factional alliances, or ratios, was obtained.

49 Interview with P. T. Premsingh, November, 1969.

50 Minutes of the Rajgahr Village Council.

impeccable manners and integrity,⁵¹ saw no reason to continue the competition once his support had been so completely undercut on the council and on the popular front. He continued to attend council meetings, but for the most part, he retired to his Abary ranch, sent his family to live in Georgetown, and lost interest in village politics.⁵² Only Dagleish was left; he was absorbed into the new political structure.⁵³

Resource Management and Social Networks

The new village resource structure and the gradual unfolding of the factional fight raise the issues of the definitions of eligibility for competition; the resulting strategies of mobilization; and the consequent composition of factional nets. Table 5.1 applies the relevant concepts to the politics of the period. The major point is the differential interpretation of strategies (Column A). Ramprashad's definition is precisely the same as in the previous period (cf. Table 4.3) while Panchar's interpretation varies in several important respects. However, the general stratification

Table 5.1: Stratification, Competitive Eligibility and Factional Category

(A)	(B) Level	(C) Stratification Pattern	(D) Levels/ Eligibility for Mobilization	(E) Mobilization Strategies		(F) Network Definition	(G) Factional Category
				Economic Sphere	Social Sphere		
	1	Mass	Political Community			Total Network	
Ramprashad Panchar	2	Elite	Political Elite	Clients: Trans- action	Kinship: Friend- ship Electoral support	Partial Network Action Set //1	Factional Support
Ramprashad Panchar	3	Miller Second Generation	Team	Patron- client ties	Kinship Friendship	Action Set //1 Action Set //2	Factional Support
Ramprashad Panchar	4		Team			Action Set //2	

51 Interview with A. B. Ramprashad, March, 1970.
52 *Ibid.*
53 Interview with Petamber Singh, October, 1969.

pattern (Column C) is intact except that the second generation of elites provided new leadership. This, however, permitted the ideology which enabled Panchar's alterations, for although the political community was still the village mass, with the political elite and team being more exclusive categories of support, Panchar radically altered the way in which the community was a political resource. Mobilization through economic ties was no longer possible after the need for credit facilities declined. Thus ended the transactional relationship between elite and mass. The villager was now a resource due to his political enfranchisement as opposed to his economic position. Phrased another way, due to a changed resource structure, Panchar altered mobilization criteria (Column E) to the political elite (Column D) with his emphasis on electoral support. Consequently, a new method emerged through which teams were mobilized/deployed for competition (Columns D and E). Therefore, the definition of factional sets also altered (Column G) as did the nature of the action-set which created the factional set (Column F).

The nexus of the changes was the new definition of the political elite. As villagers emerged from indebtedness, they used their votes to support Gerald Panchar and thus altered traditional vertical fragmentation into consensual support for a "popular front". This new diagonalism is apparent from the subversion and mobilization of factional support. After Jacob Panchar's death, there were six possible support strategies available to villagers. These, and the numerical breakdown of each option, were as follows:⁵⁴

Support moves From	To	Number	Percent of Villagers
(1) Old Panchar	G. Panchar	67	31.6%
(2) Ramprashad	G. Panchar	67	31.6%
(3) Neutrality	G. Panchar	6	2.8%
(4) Old Panchar	Ramprashad	7	3.3%
<i>or Remains with</i>			
(5) Ramprashad		64	30.2%
(6) Neutral position		1	.5%
		212	

The vast majority of Jacob Panchar's supporters turned to Gerald Panchar. Because of the enmities generated during the miller period as well as the populist ideology, this was highly predictable. Critical of course, was Ramprashad's loss of more than half his support. Since electoral strength was now crucial, and since Gerald Panchar controlled two-thirds of the vote, Ramprashad was forced to withdraw from political competition.

54 See footnote 48 above.

With political elitism defined by Panchar through electoral support, there logically followed alterations in factional definitions (Column G); in the fielding of teams (Column D); in the use of action-sets (Column F); and in some of the mobilization characteristics (Column F). For Gerald Panchar, there was first a direct association between political elitism and the factional set. He used the same action-set for both purposes. Conversely, Ramprashad continued the building of progressively more exclusive linkages; the basic transactional tie formed the political elite from which factional support was deployed and from which in turn he deployed his team. Panchar had no need for such cumulative strategizing. He headed a popularly based "movement" that needed only to win the council elections. Any support beyond the provision of electoral resources implied team deployment (action set #2). This was a major alteration in factional strategies.

Second, the teams fielded for particular competitions, such as council control,

Table 5.2: Mobilization Strategies^a

	First-Order Kinship	Friendship	Patron-client Familial	Schisms	Second-Order Kinship	Transaction
A) Ramprashad's links with Ernest Ramprashad	×					
Prem Singh		×				
Dagleish		×				
Parmeshwar		×				
^b William Jaikarran			×			
^c Abdul Ebrahim				×		×
Total	1	3	1	1	0	1
B) Panchar's links with Gerald Panchar	×					
Lalman		×				
Bhagwan		×				
Petamber Singh		×				
^b Abdul Ebrahim			×			
^c William Jaikarran				×		×
Total	1	3	1	1	0	1

Note

^b Indicates that the person at some point, defected from the leader to the other.

^c Indicates that at some point, the person was mobilized by the leader from the other.

^a A detailed comparison of mobilization strategies during the different historical periods will be carried out in Chapter X.

also changed (Table 5.2). Panchar incorporated "friendships" for the first time as evidenced in his ties with Lalman, Bhagwan and Petamber Singh. This was a product of the popular ideology surrounding his leadership: he had to admit more volunteers. Simultaneously, with the decline of the patron-client tie, the leaders' control in defining eligibility ended and Panchar had to exhibit flexibility because of his new definition of the political elite.

Beyond this, the linkages mobilized by the leaders did not differ to any great extent from the previous period. Since both were part of the elite, this is not surprising. The major change was the absence of the patron-client tie for team deployment. This tie had been one of the least preferred by the millers; its absence during this period is a product of both leadership choice as well as the decreasing importance of the tie within the village in general. It is replaced by a team member with a familial history which involved such a linkage as in the cases of William Jaikarran and Abdul Ebrahim. However, the only two subversions involved precisely this tie, another index of its decreasing importance. Similarly, there is no symmetrical economic tie characterizing any leader-follower relationships. This too exemplifies alterations in what had become viable political resources—economic linkages were being superseded by political ties.

Ultimately, what is critical (Table 5.2) is that the mobilization strategies of the two leaders were absolutely identical. In the two subversion cases, equivalent linkages were exchanged. Given common lateral linkages as well—friendship ties between the unsubverted four supporters on each team and one first-order kinship for each leader—the teams had identical interactional and structural features. This reinforces the view that the crucial distinction between the two leaders' strategies was their linkage to the general political community. However, since two evenly matched sets have been hypothesized to engage in oscillating encounters and confrontations (Bailey, 1969), let us see what propelled the competition to a decisive conclusion.

Escalation, the Fight and Control Mechanisms

Gerald Panchar, in changing the definition of political elitism, altered other tactics, such as the nature of teams and action-sets. In effect, Panchar modified patterns of resource use. According to Bailey (1969, Chapter IX), when new resources are introduced, or "when the ratio of pragmatic to normative rules increases," escalation can increase.

During the miller competition, both parties accepted explicit norms of competition: the economic support of mill clients in a patron-client relationship was translated into political power on the village council and vice versa. Then, electoral alterations and the change in Rajgahr's legal status made factional and political support possible without recourse to the economic ties in the patron-client relation-

ship. When simultaneously, alternate economic opportunities undermined the patron-client relationship, competition required a new kind of strategy. In response, each leader used resources in a different way. Ramprashad continued his support of individual villagers through interpersonal and patron-client ties; Panchar appealed, not to individuals through personal transactions, but to an electoral body. Although in both cases villagers' support was convertible to political power, the strategies differed radically: Ramprashad played the "rice miller game"; Gerald Panchar played a "new game". The two major characteristics which can cause escalation of a competition and a "fight," new resources and new strategies, were present. Why did Ramprashad not adjust to the new resource structure and why were control mechanisms absent?

It can be argued that because of the level of dissatisfaction in the village, any attempt by Ramprashad to appeal to the electorate was probably doomed to fail. The attempt of Dagleish and Premsingh ten years previously to build a political base outside the factional competition failed not only because economic indebtedness persisted, but also because they were too allied with Ramprashad to develop credibility as popular leaders. Their failure indicates the difficulties Ramprashad faced.

Any attempt by Ramprashad to alter his tactics was further complicated by the attitude of the traditional mediator in village politics, the District Commissioner. His obstruction of the development loans contributed to the dissatisfaction. Of even more significance, the District Commissioner ignored Ramprashad's repeated efforts to force him into a mediating role. Three major petitions were presented by Ramprashad supporters, a traditional means of securing the District Commissioner's involvement. The first petition, in 1944, was signed by twelve Ramprashad supporters. Two years later, seven supported Panchar. The second petition was signed by ten Ramprashad followers in 1944. Within two years, three had switched their support to Panchar. The final petition, in early 1945, was signed by eighty-three villagers protesting the dismissal of John Ramprashad as Overseer. Of the signatories, fourteen were old Panchar supporters; the rest, Ramprashad's supporters. Of the fourteen, two later defected to Ramprashad while the rest of the signatories defected to Panchar. Of Ramprashad's sixty-nine supporters, twenty-eight later joined Gerald Panchar. This indicates that between 1944 and 1946, the majority of defections were occurring and Ramprashad's support was being eroded. In addition, since petitions are a strategy to mobilize popular support and in this case were a means to obtain the intercession of the District Commissioner, and since all the petitions during that time were from Ramprashad, it can be assumed that Gerald Panchar was largely in control of the political competition after 1944.

Finally, the settlement of the Amin-Bhagwandin land dispute was also a new strategy which again upset miller politics. Ramprashad, with whom the Amin family had been traditionally aligned, took up the cause in the way which had always characterized factional competition. Buttressed by his strong electoral base, however,

Panchar introduced conciliation. In doing so, he eliminated traditional factional strategies from local politics.

This point was ultimately conceded by the remnants of Ramprashad's support. For the 1945 chairman elections, none of his team attended the meeting. In any case, only Dagleish and Ramprashad were left on council. The remainder were Panchar's supporters. William Jaikarran was elected unopposed.⁵⁵ The following year, Ramprashad's supporters again did not attend; Gerald Panchar was elected chairman unopposed.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Minutes of the Rajgahr Village Council.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*